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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography on Vietnamese Amerasians includes primary and secondary sources as well as reviews of three documentary films. Sources were selected in order to provide an overview of the historical and political context of Amerasian resettlement and a review of the scant available research on coping and adaptation with this population. The literature search conducted to create this bibliography focused on the time frame from January 1962 through October 1989. While a few references, particularly those pertaining to legislation, include Amerasians of ethnic backgrounds other than Vietnamese, the search focused primarily on Vietnamese Amerasians. The search drew from the following sources: Psychological Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, Public Affairs Information Service, Dissertation Abstracts Magazine Index, National Newspapers Index, ERIC, and Medline. The bibliography is intended to be useful to resettlement professionals and caseworkers who are assisting Vietnamese Amerasians on a daily basis, as well as to clinicians and researchers whose work with refugee youth include this population. The review underscores the need for careful, longitudinal work focusing on educational, vocational, and emotional needs of this population. Citations for 34 articles and 3 films are included. (Author/NB)

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VIETNAMESE AMERASIANS: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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INTRODUCTION

The following annotated bibliography on Vietnamese Amerasians represents the initial piece of a larger research report, contracted with the Office of Refugee Resettlement. It includes primary and secondary sources as well as reviews of three documentary films. Sources were selected in order to provide an overview of the historical and political context of Amerasian resettlement and a review of the scant available research on coping and adaptation with this population.

This literature search focused on the time frame from January 1962 - October 1989. While a few references, particularly those pertaining to legislation, include Amerasians of ethnic backgrounds other than Vietnamese (e.g., Korean, Thai, Japanese, Filipino) this literature search focused on Vietnamese Amerasians. The search drew upon the following sources: Psychological Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, Public Affairs Information Service, Dissertation Abstracts Magazine Index, National Newspapers Index, ERIC and Medline. In addition, many personal contacts were made with individuals (clinicians, resettlement personnel, academic researchers) who have been or are currently working with Vietnamese Amerasians and their families. We would particularly like to thank Bill Eckhof of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, InterAction's Advisory Committee, and the National Consultative Working Group on Amerasian Resettlement. Rusty Lovell's patient assistance in preparing the manuscript is greatly appreciated. It is hoped that this bibliography will prove useful to resettlement professionals and caseworkers who are assisting Vietnamese Amerasians on a day-to-day basis, as well as to clinicians and researchers whose work with refugee youth include this population.

ABSTRACT

Very little empirical research has been done on Vietnamese Amerasians. It appears, however, that with the passage of the Amerasian Homecoming Act in late 1987 the political climate has shifted. This shift is evident not only in the dramatically increased numbers of Amerasians leaving Vietnam, but in an increase in scholarly research as well. Still, there are no known longitudinal, prospective studies of resettlement with this population. What is available is largely journalistic and/or anecdotal. Unfortunately, much of this writing and reporting has served to fuel, rather than to dispel, common misconceptions. Thus, for example, the myth that most Amerasians were predominantly "street children" bereft of family and resources has been perpetuated.

Most writers familiar with life in either Vietnam or the Philippine Refugee Processing Center focus on the Amerasians' struggle around "identity" and the concrete difficulties their families have had and continue to face. These include the economic and educational hardships brought on by being fatherless in a patriarchal society. Complicating matters are the misconceptions that the Amerasians themselves have regarding their future in the United States, especially as it pertains to their relationship with their American fathers. Most of the early articles reviewed here have a decidedly political tone. The most current papers focus on the real world dilemmas posed by the Amerasians' "homecoming" and thus, eclipse the long-standing political battles over responsibility for their welfare.

Our review of the literature underscores the need for careful, longitudinal work focusing on the educational, vocational, and emotional needs of this unique population including their accompanying family members. Toward that end the authors have collected baseline data on a randomly selected sample of 259 Vietnamese Amerasian adolescents and young adults while they were in the Philippine Refugee Processing Center in Bataan. In a forthcoming report, "Vietnamese Amerasians: Practical Implications of Current Research," we hope to add empirical weight to the qualitative descriptions that comprise the core of this review.

Amerasian Update. (1988) Office of Refugee Resettlement, Brenden, M. (Editor), December.

This monthly newsletter issued by InterAction and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service under a cooperative agreement with the Office of Refugee Resettlement first appeared in December of 1988. It is available through LIRS, 122 C Street, N.W., Suite 300, Washington, DC, 20001-2171.

Intended to increase the communication flow between several parts of the Amerasian Resettlement Program from pre-arrival processing through resettlement at the local "cluster site" communities, the newsletter provides current statistics on Amerasian interviews in Vietnam, projected United States arrivals, and announcements regarding the National Advisory Committee and the National Consultative Working group. Coverage of new initiatives at the individual cluster sites and reports from special task forces, e.g., United States Father-Amerasian Reunion and Mental Health are also included.

Bloomfield, F. (1983) "America's forgotten children." *Asia Magazine,* 3(12), 3-10.

The situation of Amerasian children in Thailand is contrasted to those in Vietnam and South Korea, where they are described as being "virtual outcasts." The author points out that in many Asian societies children legally belong to their father and without one they have no legal rights, e.g., obtaining citizenship, securing a job, or getting legally married.

The formation and work of the Pearl S. Buck Foundation, originally established to help children of the Korean War, is described. The largest component of the Foundation exists in Thailand where an estimated 5,000 Amerasian children were born during the Vietnam War. The elements of the program are discussed including registration, tracing, adoption and in-country support services. The article includes three personal vignettes about specific Thai Amerasians.

Brady, K. (1989) "The women we abandoned," Parade Magazine, *Boston Sunday Globe*, Sunday, February 19.

Based on interviews done in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) this article is focused on the plight of mothers of Amerasian children who remain in Vietnam and their desire to better their children's lives through coming to the United States. Noting the long wait that many have endured, the article states that a park across from the Foreign Office in Saigon is referred to as "the Amerasian Children's Market," a place where since 1975, these mothers have met waiting to apply for exit visas. The author gives a very personal account of her experience and, while disguising actual names, uses individual stories to illustrate her story.

These mothers are described as having had loving, supportive, though short-term "relationships" with American G.I.'s. The author states that most of the G.I.'s and the women were very young (19-20) at the time of their relationships. The women's lives, for the most part, are portrayed as having been made more difficult ("poverty, degradation, fear") because of this past association. Amerasians are said to live with "a triple stigma of illegitimacy, poverty for lack of a male breadwinner and racial prejudice."

Brody, J. and Christensen, K. (1989) "Hardships greet Amerasians in U.S.," *Orange Country Register*, June 11, 12, 16.

This "special report" based upon interviews with Amerasians, their family members, United States government officials and resettlement professionals provides a broad portrait of the Amerasian resettlement experience. The article moves back and forth from personal, individual stories to factual information such as a chronology of Amerasian resettlement and a review of the Amerasian Homecoming Act. The article covers a geographically diverse number of "cluster sites," including de facto cluster sites in California. Personal stories in the text are accompanied by numerous photographs. Individual portraits of "successful" resettlement (e.g., educational achievements, solid employment, strong family relationships) are contrasted with interviews that illustrate special problems including: school difficulties; housing in poor, inner-city neighborhoods and reunion with American fathers.

Cerquone, J. (1986) "Vietnam's American Children," *Commonweal*, April 25.

The author notes that, historically, Vietnamese Amerasians have been overlooked, stating that the United States was embarrassed by its war-time legacy and that the Vietnamese government was preoccupied with the postwar reordering of its society. An overview of the United Nations administered Orderly Departure Program (OPD) and its impact on the Amerasians is reviewed.

The official Vietnamese government position has been that Amerasians are not formally discriminated against and can become citizens at age 18. However, while having access to education and employment, the Amerasians' social, political, and economic future has been seriously jeopardized by the Vietnamese value on racial purity and fatherhood. Though the Vietnamese have noted their humanitarian intent in allowing the Amerasians to leave, the article suggests that the underlying reason is the need to establish good relations with the West and to be released from the problems of caring for them. The federal legislation giving immigration priority to Amerasians (P.L. 97-359) is described as overly restrictive and inappropriate. It was not applicable to Vietnamese Amerasians because consular relations did not exist between the two countries at the time of its passage.

A history of departures from 1982-1986 is reviewed and the author notes that each Amerasian was arriving in the United States with 1.4 relatives. The politics and animosity that mark the difficult history of Amerasian immigration is described, from disagreements between the two governments that resulted in a unilateral halt by the Vietnamese in March 1986, to reports of inconsistent and prejudiced decisions made by United States consular officers. The negative impact of split families and the effort of the voluntary agencies to remedy that situation are highlighted.

Cerquone, J. (1988) Disorderly departures. *Veteran*, June pp. 13-15.

This article focuses on United States Vietnam veterans and their relationship to the Amerasian issue. Individual cases of veterans who have mounted longstanding efforts to locate their Amerasian children are presented, including the extreme frustrations endured by some. Criticisms of the slow and bureaucratic processing are discussed. The author

comments on the exaggerated and often incomplete reporting of the Amerasian issue in the popular press.

The piece notes the increasing interest of the Vietnam Veterans Association of America and cites a 1983 decision at the national level to actively assist in Amerasian resettlement. Examples of projects by local VVA chapters in New York, Texas, and California are described.

Cerquone, J. (1989) "War and Reunion," *Veteran*, January, pp. 19-21, 27.

This article recounts the efforts of one Vietnam veteran and his Vietnamese wife (Wes and Loni Anderson) to gain custody of their Amerasian daughter, Lang. The article is decidedly critical of bureaucratic problems in processing within the State Department and the Orderly Departure Program, as is evidenced through the Anderson's story. A tracing program (The Amerasian Registry) run by Bruce Burns, a lawyer and Vietnam veteran in California, is discussed.

Felsman, J.K. and Felsman, I.C. (1986) "Vietnamese Amerasians: Identification and Identity," *Cultural Survival Quarterly,* 10(4):57-58.

Based on clinical experience at the Philippine Refugee Processing Center, Suan Plu Transit Center in Bangkok, Thailand, and site visits to local United States resettlement programs, the authors make a distinction between identification and the process of identity formation during adolescence. It is noted that comparatively little research has been done on identity formation in biracial, bicultural children, especially those of Asian descent. The authors caution those involved with Amerasian resettlement not to assume or over - emphasize the issue of "identity crisis" with Amerasian youth. Brief clinical vignettes are provided.

Felsman, J.K., and Davis, R.L. (1988) "Amerasians: The solution isn't simply to move them," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 19:9-A.

This editorial is critical of the Amerasian Homecoming Act for its lack of provision for the post-arrival resettlement needs of this population. Amerasians are described as a diverse but high-risk group who have required increased special services both at the Philippine

Refugee Processing Center and upon arrival in the United States. The lack of adequate special services for other Southeast Asian refugee youth in the United States is noted.

Felsman, J.K. (1988) "Mental health issues and Vietnamese Amerasians," *Passage*, Summer: 54-55.

The author refers to clinical experience with Amerasian youth and emphasizes significant diversity observed in both their physical appearance and psychosocial histories. People working with Amerasians are urged to pay particular attention to assessing and working with Amerasians' strengths. Sympathy and empathy are distinguished and discussed in terms of developing relationships with Amerasian youth. Comments are offered regarding school difficulties, group work with Amerasians and their mothers, and the need for increased communication between local resettlement agencies and the training programs in the Philippines.

Felsman, J.K. and Johnson, M.C. (1989) "For Amerasians, a welcome mat is not enough," *Los Angeles Times*, January 23/Part II: 5.

This editorial is critical of the Amerasian Homecoming Act. The legislation is deemed to be focused primarily on immigration without adequate consideration of the post-arrival needs of this population, a group considered to be at high-risk for significant problems in adjustment and long-term adaptation.

Felsman, J.K., Johnson, M.C., Felsman, I.C. and Leong, F.T.L. (1989) "Amerasians at risk in public schools?" *In America: Perspectives on Refugee Resettlement*, Vol. 1. 4, June: 16.

In this issue devoted to Amerasians, the authors report that "a substantial segment of Amerasian adolescents (ages 13-17) appear to be at higher risk for poor adjustment in the public schools than their Vietnamese refugee peers." Data is cited relative to amount of schooling in Vietnam as well as performances on native and English language literacy tests developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics. While only 6% of the Amerasians scored above the beginning level in the Preparation for American Secondary Schools (PASS) program, 43% of a comparable Vietnamese sample scored above this level. Additionally,

an attitudinal difference was noted in that 46% of the Amerasian sample versus 28% of the Vietnamese sample reported that the statement "School and studying means very little to me" described them "very well." Implications are briefly discussed.

Felsman, J.K., Johnson, M.C., Leong, F.T.L. and Felsman, I.C. (1989) "Vietnamese Amerasians: Practical implications of current research." Office of Refugee Resettlement, Washington, DC.

This paper reports empirical data collected on a randomized sample of Amerasians (N=259) at the Philippine Refugee Processing Center in 1988. The paper establishes an historical context, provides a brief literature review, and discusses design, methodology and the selection of measures. The authors note that this study is a cross-sectional, pre-arrival view of Amerasians and cautions against overgeneralizing its findings.

Quantitative findings regarding demographic characteristics suggest that the Amerasians population appears to be changing. Cohort effects include increasing age, increased numbers of accompanying family members (including Vietnamese stepfathers) and increasingly rural rather than urban backgrounds. Findings on measures of psychological distress indicate that the Amerasians do not appear to evidence greater levels of distress than their Vietnamese refugee peers. The clinical utility of the instruments is reviewed and concludes that screening instruments such as the Hopkins Symptom Checklist-25, Vietnamese Depression Scale, and Center for Epidemiologic Studies - Depression Scale are most likely tapping levels of general psychological distress and are not measures of specific disorders such as depression. Findings from the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the Test of Non-Verbal Intelligence are also presented.

Finally, a risk profile is presented and discussed. The paper's focus is on practical implications for caseworkers at the local community level. After noting the clear diversity in this population and warning against the tendency to stereotype, recommendations are made at the levels of primary prevention, secondary intervention and tertiary care. Concerns are raised about the discrepancy between the Amerasians' expectations and their levels of preparedness. Implications are drawn as to the potential long-term service needs of a significant percentage of this population, and both continuity and sustained contact is recommended.

Goose, S.D., & Horst, R.K. (1988) "Amerasians in Vietnam: Still waiting." *Indochina Issues, 83.*

This article raises questions about the sincerity of the United States and Vietnamese governments to facilitate the departure of Amerasians from Vietnam, and about the effectiveness of the United Nations' Orderly Departure Program (ODP) in meeting the emigration needs of the Amerasians in Vietnam.

Particular attention is paid to the history of actual legislation regarding Amerasians, culminating in the Amerasian Homecoming Act of December, 1987. This act suggested that the issue of Amerasian immigration be handled as a bilateral issue separate from other issues being negotiated with Vietnam, that the Amerasians not be called refugees, that they should be admitted under a new category of immigrants without numerical limitations, and that there be a screening process to prevent abuse of the system.

Problems remaining include the fact that the program will not meet the two-year deadline (there are an estimated 8-12,000 Amerasians still in Vietnam), the backlog of approved persons waiting to depart, and the continued lack of an official relationship between the United States and Vietnamese governments. Suggestions are made to help accelerate the immigration process and make it more effective. These include the need to more accurately survey the number and location of Amerasians in Vietnam establish; to a transit center, especially for urgent cases who are on the streets in Vietnam to facilitate cooperation between different levels of authority within Vietnam; to allow other airlines besides Air Vietnam to transport Amerasians out of Vietnam; and to keep the United States flexible with regard to documentation.

InterAction Amerasian Resettlement Program. (1989) "Amerasian Families and American Fathers: Consideration for responses to tracing requests." (Available c/o Marta Brenden, LIRS, 122 C. Street, Washington, DC, 20001.

Discusses the information of a task force commissioned by InterAction to generate recommendations for father search requests from Amerasians. Recommendations are directed at VOLAGS in the cluster sites. These recommendations include:

1. Understanding the nature of the problem.
2. Forming a Task Force. This potentially may include family service agencies, adoption agencies, self-help groups of adoptees, and mental health clinics.

A focus on understanding the nature of the wish to search on the part of the Amerasian is underscored. The second major task is seen as educating service providers so that they may be more supportive. "Caution and Limiting Considerations" are noted. The major limitation seems to be the fact that father searching is "beyond the scope" of the VOLAGS' mission. Dealing with expectations and disappointments while honoring privacy and confidentiality is stressed.

The Task Force rejected the idea of forming a centralized registry service as not "possible or advisable." Rather, resources are offered ranging from the ODP contact person, inquiries through the American Red Cross, the Veterans Administration and national VOLGAS.

Kelly, M.M. (1989) "Clinical Considerations for counselors working with Amerasians in Search of their United States fathers." (unpublished paper) Available through InterAction's Amerasian Resettlement Program, c/o Marta Brenden, LIRS, 122 C. Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20001.

Written as a guide for clinicians, this paper addresses the issue of father-searches among Amerasians. Drawing a direct parallel from the clinical literature on adoption, the author compares Amerasians to adoptees. While not especially founded on developmental theory (e.g., the treatment of issues of identity is circumscribed around the connection to biological parents) the paper is informative in a number of areas.

Foremost, it sensitizes counselors to the likelihood that many Amerasian adolescents will be struggling with concerns over "Who Am I" and "Where did I Come from," and that these questions will naturally involve curiosity about their American fathers. Potential motivating factors are discussed including the need for a clearer identity, the acknowledgment of the father, control and mastery over their destiny, and hopes of an actual relationship with the father.

Pitfalls are also discussed regarding the search process itself. While numbers

aren't used, expectations of connection with American fathers far exceed actual reunions. That counselors need to be supportive in this process is underscored repeatedly. Thus, supportive therapy is recommended over insight-oriented therapy as an aid to the Amerasian.

Fears of rejection (by the father) are discussed as is the scenario of a reunion with an ambivalent father. The author contends that counseling an Amerasian who has received a flat rejection or is unable to locate a father is "far simpler" than the situation wherein the father is ambivalent.

Finally, search issues are detailed including emotional reactions (community disappointment, anger, anxiety, and fear), stages of shock, integration and adoption and cultural factors. The problem of growing up in a particular society without a father is noted as further evidence for supportive counseling.

Luce, D. (1971) "Amerasian children in Vietnam." *Christian Century*, 88, 996-997.

This early article based on personal observation states that as of 1971 there were an estimated 400,000 children in Vietnam who were fathered by American soldiers. The United States is described as unwilling to accept any responsibility for the children because the war was politically unpopular.

The Vietnamese mothers are noted to be from mostly rural areas. Out of economic need, some were forced to work in bars and, eventually, resort to prostitution. Many became "temporary wives" to American servicemen, and were led to believe that the servicemen would marry, provide financially, or come back for them. In reality, all too often the servicemen ignore the existence of the child and few are reported to have maintained any contact.

The extremity of the financial burden on the mothers is emphasized as are the long-term obstacles that face them. The author states that, unfortunately, the United States government, like the individual servicemen, chooses to ignore the problem.

Majka, L. (1989). "Vietnamese Amerasians in the United States: Their social history and current problems." Paper presented at InterCongress meeting, International Sociological Association, Research Committee on Migration, March 31.

This paper overviews theoretical models of refugee adaptation and assimilation and then specifically addresses the experience of Amerasians. Characteristics of Amerasians are noted, including references to the USCC (1985) work and that of the United States Amerasian Resettlement Planning Committee (1988). The paper focuses on an empirical attempt to test the validity of prior data regarding factors contributing to "youths' problems" by incorporating them into the dependant variable, including data from five (5) organizations dealing with Amerasians, and using a multivariate analytic approach. Specific factors tested for their ability to predict Amerasians' involvement in "social and personal problems" include: gender, Amerasians' years of foreign education, mother with problems, father's race, and community context or neighborhood of residence. All of the above had been found in earlier reports to be associated with psychosocial problems. Several new variables were also considered, including number of siblings, nature of home environment, and type of resettlement organization having primary contact with an Amerasian and his close relatives. Finally, the report tested the differences in occurrence of problems of Amerasian youth as a function of the reporting agency.

Problems were defined as "difficulties in a United States high school, participation in gangs, utilization of drugs, involvement in crime, problems in family relationships, and suicide attempts." As expected, reporting rates were higher when drawn from the Mutual Assistance Association than from VOLAG'S. An average of 83% of the Amerasians were reported to have problems within the first two (2) years of resettlement. Even four (4) years after resettlement, the average number of Amerasians with problems was 62%. F-tests found significant associations between problems and gender (males> females), father's race (minorities> Caucasians), number of siblings (less> more), residence outside central Southeast Asian community (outside> inside), and an unstable home environment in the United States. There factors were not, however, independent of the reporting agency. That is, only gender and father's race were significantly predicted by both VOLAGS and the MAA.

Two regression analyses using the aforementioned risk factors were conducted, one for VOLAGS' data, one for MAA's. Results showed that maleness was a significant predictor in both formulas, but was the only variable to overlap. VOLAGS found residence outside the Southeast Asian community to be a significant predictor of number of problems, whereas MAA's added unstable home environment and father's race to the list. Notably, years of foreign education, having a mother with problems, and the number of teenage siblings did not predict problems in these youth. Also of note is the finding that the variables accumulated from the MAA source accounted for much more variance than the VOLAG data (multiple R's and R2's of .55/.30 (VOLAG'S) versus .71/.51 (MAA's).

Measures Taken for Eurasian Children Affected by the War in Indochina (1971) French Embassy, Washington, DC, June 15. (8 pages).

As early as 1885, when the French began to settle in Indochina, "children were born of French fathers and indigenous mothers (Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian)." An overview of the background, formation and organization of the Federation for French Children in Indochina, a non-profit public service organization focused on the needs of Eurasian children is provided.

The "evacuation" of some 3,000 Eurasian children to France began as early as 1947. In addition, Eurasian families, estimated to total some 30-40 thousand persons, also departed for France during the war. An estimated 120,000 Eurasian children have benefited from the Federation's programs and operating budgets from 1958-1970 are reported.

The civil status and nationality of Eurasians is discussed through a review of specific legal provisions: the Decree of November 4, 1928, article 55 of the French Nationality Code, and the convention of August 16, 1955. In essence, these provisions provide French citizenship to Eurasians, including those born out of wedlock and unrecognized by their fathers. Under French law, at age 18 Eurasians have a six month period in which to opt for French or Vietnamese nationality.

Mrazek, R., Ridge, T. (1988) Amerasian Homecoming Act, House Joint Resolution 395/Public Law 100-202.

A bill introduced "to permit the immigration of Vietnamese Amerasians to the United States," this legislation removed a number of the political barriers that had previously made immigration very difficult for Amerasians. Specifically, it allowed "close family members" to accompany Amerasian children, waived numerical limitations, identified them as immigrants (not refugees), provided for immigrant visas, and permitted waivers of certain grounds for exclusion. It's original time frame covers a "2-year period beginning 90 days after the date of the enactment of this act." "Aliens covered" were to be living in Vietnam, and had to satisfy a consular officer in a face-to-face interview that they met the following criteria: a) born in Vietnam between 1/1/62 and 1/1/76 and fathered by a citizen of the United States, b) the spouse or child of a principal alien; or c) the principal alien's natural mother or acted in effect as the principal alien's mother, father, or next-of-kin. As immigrants, these Amerasians and their families are then eligible for benefits under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Nicassio, P., La Barbera, J.D., Coburn, P. and Finley, R. (1986) "The psychosocial adjustment of the Amerasian refugees: Findings from the Personality Inventory for Children," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 174 (9): 541-44.

An investigation of the "psychosocial adjustment of 24 Amerasian youths." This study used the Personality Inventory for Children, translated into Vietnamese, abbreviated to 280 items and completed by the mothers of the children. However, the authors note that "In Vietnam many of these children lived primarily with extended family relatives rather than with their natural mother." Results presented include two case vignettes and an analysis of the PIC findings. Using American derived t-scales, the authors found two groups of subjects one (N=11) with profiles reflective of somatization and a second group (N=13) who scored high on the withdrawal scale. They conclude that "Amerasian youths showed greater psychological deviance than one would expect in a nonclinical American sample."

Quinn-Judge S. (1983) "Children of the war start leaving for America." *Indochina Issues* 35. (6 pages)

This article provides a brief overview of the plight of Vietnamese children of American servicemen and how the governments of both countries are responding. At the time of this article, estimates of Amerasian children remaining in Vietnam ranged from 8,000 to 25,000 (with the latter figure being seen as unrealistically high by many).

Although discrimination is not an offical policy of the Vietnamese government, serious problems face Amerasians in Vietnam, from the ridicule and stigma of being fatherless and of mixed-race to the hardships of material poverty. The author states that Amerasians and their families in Vietnam live outside of the official system and have little hope or intention of integrating.

In the eyes of both governments (as well as most Amerasians and their families) the best solution to the Amerasians dilemma is immigration to the United States. The gradual acceptance of United States responsibility for all Amerasians is described and the conflict over the mechanisms for processing immigration, exacerbated by the lack of diplomatic ties, is reported. A brief insert on Amerasian children in Thailand is also included.

Ranard, D.A., and Gilzow, D.F. (1989) "The Amerasians." *In America: Perspectives on refugee resettlement* (20 pages) Vol. 1, no.4, Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC, June.

This issue is devoted entirely to Vietnamese Amerasians and includes historical background (e.g., fears of persecution, educational experience, discrimination), as well as United States experience. Articles are based in part on results of a telephone survey conducted in April and May of 1989 with a number of United States based resettlement personnel, primarily representing voluntary agencies. Strengths of Amerasians are noted including survival skills, openness, motivation and eagerness to work. Variability was highlighted: "About the only generalization you can make is that you can't generalize." Problems with work, school, acceptance, friends, expectations, identity and social issues are noted.

A brief report about Amerasian mothers dispels the myth that these women were primarily bargirls, noting the diversity of their backgrounds. In the United States these women suffer common problems: lack of job skills, little prior education, English acquisition, single parenthood and coping with adolescent children. The problem of social isolation was highlighted. A profile of an Amerasian mother is included.

Cluster site resettlement is addressed, including a map of Amerasian cluster sites in the United States. The rationale for a cluster site approach is presented (increased assurance that adequate resources will be available). Mention is made of an exemplary cluster site in Utica, New York.

Statistics offered are demographic: number of Amerasians entering United States, arranging family members, marital status, urban/rural and educational background.

The "at-riskness" of Amerasians in public schools is argued as are the difficulties in father searching. The Journal is available through the Refugee Service Center, Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd St. N.W., Washington, DC 20037. Finally, sources and additional readings are noted.

Refugee Reports (1983) "Misconceptions reported as implementation of Amerasian legislation is awaited, " IV (4), February 25.

This report addresses why the signed law, P.L. 97-359, which was to facilitate emigration of Amerasians into the United States had not yet been implemented. "Misconceptions" discussed include: the 'adoptability' of Amerasians, the waiting period before leaving countries of origin, changes made in the original bill, portrayal of Amerasians' life in Vietnam, and separation of families. The notion that Amerasians are predominantly living alone or on the streets was dispelled. Thus, the Amerasians would be coming with family and P.L. 97-359 did not provide for families. The fear of splitting families was shared both by the Vietnamese government and some of the private United States organizations involved in resettlement. A further complication with the law was that it required sponsors to maintain financial responsibility "at 12 percent above the poverty threshold for five years or until their charges reach 21 years of age." The regulations

needed to enact the bill were not expected to be final. They were designed to operate on "an interim basis, and open to comment for a 30-day period..." It is noteworthy that the legislation in question covers the children of all United States citizens and is not limited to Vietnam. At the date of the publication, 100 Amerasians had come to the United States from Vietnam. As refugees, they were entitled to assistance available under the Refugee Act of 1980.

Ridge, T. (1988) "Give them a chance to come to the U.S.," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 19:9-A.

An editorial defending the Amerasian Homecoming Act concludes that it serves its purpose well, creating the opportunity for Amerasians to come to the United States. The article notes that Amerasians may have problems upon resettlement but takes the position that, historically, such difficulties have been a common experience of all immigrants. A history of the legislation's evolution is provided.

Ronk, D. (1986) "The Amerasian child." *Passage*. 2(1): 32-35.

A personal account of the author's work with Vietnamese Amerasians at the Philippine Refugee Processing Center (PRPC) in Bataan. At the time of its writing, late 1984, 400-500 Amerasians were at the PRPC, an influx due to increased departures though the Orderly Departure Program. The author's impressions are that they are "refugee children with special problems." Behavioral problems include evidence of being "undisciplined, frustrated, tough," and the author notes that they are very conflicted about "identity." The initial lack of preparedness of the PRPC for their special needs is discussed. The article raises disturbing concerns regarding the potential adjustment of these children.

Shade, J. (1981) "America's forgotten children: The Amerasians," Pearl S. Buck Foundation: Perkasie, Pennsylvania. (147 pages)

This report estimated that in 1981 there were nearly 85,000 Amerasian children in varying states of need in nine Asian nations, a fact, the author states, that is not really known by the American people. He argues that the United States has ignored responsibility for caring for these half-Americans and that Asian nations have had to carry the burden of providing for them. The situation of Amerasians in different Asian countries is described. The term Amerasian is credited to the late novelist Pearl S. Buck and the creation of the Pearl S. Buck Foundation and the Mission are thoroughly reviewed. A history of legislation pertaining to Amerasians is provided.

In Asian nations the father is central to the obtainment of a birth record, citizenship, education, and employment and thus, because of their abandonment, many Amerasians do not exist legally. In addition, because Asian nations are homogeneous in society and culture, the Amerasians are further ostracized as a result of their mixed-race. Life of the Amerasians is characterized by extreme poverty, political helplessness, and cultural ostracism.

The author states there are no quick and facile solutions to the Amerasian problem but seriously faults the United States government's poor record of providing for Amerasians. Before any improvements can result, it is argued, the United States needs to officially recognize its co-responsibility for the Amerasians. Without such acknowledgment, the problem of the Amerasians will continue to mount, dramatically increasing the human and financial costs for which the United States is ultimately co-responsible.

Terris, D. (1987) "What place can there be for me?" *Boston Sunday Globe.* June.

The author contrasts the portrayal of Southeast Asian youth as either honor students or gang members with those "lost in the middle, suffering great stress and confusion" and discusses the complexities facing Amerasians, particularly in regard to adolescence and identity. The article presents qualitative portraits of three Amerasian high school students

from Brighton, Massachusetts. (Notably, Brighton High School housed the only bilingual high school program in Boston for native speakers of Vietnamese.) The risk that students without high ability may fall "between the cracks" is emphasized, in light of what the author calls the "greatest challenge" facing the schools, i.e., educating these children in a second language when they often have had very little education in their native tongue. The Boston school system's attempt to treat all Southeast Asian refugee youth as a single ethnic group is described as well as the consequences of that "doomed approach." Beyond these educational difficulties, the author offers descriptions of the special problems encountered by female and Afro-Amerasians as well as specific concerns involved in father searches. Interwoven among the students' stories is the historical context of Amerasian emigration. The impact of the inauguration of the Orderly Departure Program (ODP) in 1979 is noted relative to the "disturbing power struggle over the children themselves."

Trautfield, M.T. (1984) "America's responsibility to Amerasian children: Too little, too late." *Brooklyn Journal of International Law.* X (1): 54-82.

This article offers a thorough review of the legal aspects of Amerasian immigration through 1983. While emphasizing the situation of Vietnamese Amerasians, the author provides a broader context by including Amerasians of other Asian ethnic backgrounds.

Longstanding obstacles to immigration for Vietnamese Amerasians are reviewed, including: problems of documentation, lack of diplomatic relations between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, quota limitations, financial difficulties, and the immigration status of the children's mothers. The discriminatory treatment of Amerasians in Vietnam is discussed, describing them as social outcasts who are second-class citizens and "rank among the lowest socio-economic classes in some of the poorest Asian countries."

International legal considerations regarding nationality and citizenship as they apply to Vietnamese Amerasians are reviewed, including the role of the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees and the status of Amerasians in the Orderly Departure Program, initiated in 1979.

The French approach to Eurasian children born of French citizens is described. The social programs in Vietnam of the Federation for French Children in Indochina are noted as is the process of evacuating some Eurasian children which began as early as 1947. French laws regarding questions of citizenship are also reviewed. A sharp contrast is drawn between the French approach and that of the United States.

The evolution and limitations of the 1982 "Amerasian Immigration Act" are discussed. The author states that this amendment to the Immigration and Nationality Act recognizes, in effect, "that the United States has a moral, if not legal responsibility for Amerasian children" and concludes that "the problem will not be eliminated until all Amerasians wishing to immigrate to the United States are invited and encouraged to do so."

United States Catholic Conference (1985) "In our father's land: Vietnamese Amerasians in the United States." The United States Catholic Conference, Migration and Refugee Services, November.

Described as the "first comprehensive and statistical profile of the Amerasian population in the United States," this survey presents findings based on questionnaires completed by refugee personnel for both family cases and unaccompanied refugee minors resettled by USCC during 1983 and 1984. The unit of analysis was the Amerasian family, drawn from a large non-randomized sample (251 cases involving 350 Amerasian children and their immediate relatives). Chapters are devoted to background, Amerasian families in Vietnam, Amerasian families in the United States, resettlement issues, and Amerasian unaccompanied minors. The mean age of the USCC sample was 13 years with nearly an even split between males and females. Among the family groups 71.3% were "free cases" while 28.3% were resettled with anchor relatives. Seventy-nine percent of the sample came to the United States with their biological mother while 6.8% came with an adoptive mother. Ten percent of the Amerasians were seen as having "serious adjustment problems," e.g., running away, withdrawal, depression, and 10% of the families experienced "case breakdowns." Two major factors associated with such problems included not being with biological mother and having a history of no formal schooling.

The report also contains substantial information on the mothers of the Amerasians and highlights some of their special needs. The author notes that these women do not fit

the often stereotyped image of having been bargirls or prostitutes. Most are confronting the problems of being a single parent head of household, of whom 41% remained unemployed. Twenty percent of the mothers reportedly arrived with "serious medical problems" and by caseworker judgment, 10% of these women experience mental health problems serious enough to interfere with their daily functioning.

Core findings include: that integration has been easier for those children whose needs were carefully evaluated, that children tend to acquire language competency and thus move more readily between and within their own culture and that of the United States than do their parents and older siblings. Recommendations are offered concerning the need for more extensive background information, staff continuity, evaluation of assistance programs, and comparing integration processes for adults versus children.

United States Catholic Conference (1988) "To welcome the Amerasians," Migration and Refugee Services, October, (29 pages)

This report provides background information on the Amerasian issue including a history of the United States response and the long-term involvement of the United States Catholic Conference. Results of a needs assessment and an inventory of service responses among its diocesan programs is presented. A copy of the Amerasian Resettlement Program agreement between the Office of Refugee Resettlement and InterAction is included in the appendix.

A survey questionnaire seeking qualitative, experiential information on Amerasian resettlement was collected and then followed-up by telephone interview. The report includes an overview of the Amerasian caseload and briefly reviews the situation of Amerasians in Vietnam and at the Philippine Refugee Processing Center.

A series of recommendations are made at each phase of the resettlement process including: improving the histories gathered in Vietnam and making professional counseling services available at this early stage of pre-departure. Recommendations for the PPRC include: increased outreach services in the refugee neighborhoods, the creation of work/study opportunities at PASS, an exchange between PRPC social workers and those in the United States, increased parent counseling services, a review of the billeting

procedures (especially for attached minors and women/girls), and development of case histories on all Amerasian cases. Recommendations for United States resettlement include: that increased information on the cluster sites be sent to the PRPC, that networking of services in the cluster sites be intensified, that more opportunities for group work for Amerasians and their mothers be developed, and that involvement of the Vietnamese community in these efforts be increased.

U.S. Government. Amerasian Immigration Proposals. (1982) Hearing before the Subcommittee on the Judiciary. United States Senate, 97th Congress 2nd session. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC.

A predecessor of the Amerasian Homecoming Act, this bill hoped to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide preferential treatment in the admission of "certain children of United States armed forces personnel." The hearing considered a bill not limited solely to Vietnamese Amerasians, including children born in Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Japan, the Philippines, and Taiwan. It specified, however, that the father must have been a United States citizen who, at the time of conception, was on active duty in the United States armed forces. Sponsors needed to provide proof of financial support. Prepared statements from a number of committee members voice support for the bill and offer some amendments concerning eligibility. Letters from Amerasians attending Gonzaga University urging passage of what was called the Denton/McKinney bill are included in the record as are letters from mothers of Amerasian children still in Vietnam.

Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (1989), "Report on the Amerasian issue" August (34 pages)

This paper reports the VVAF's findings on the current state of the "Amerasian situation." Recommendations are offered. The delegation made on-site visits to the various settings in the chain of Amerasian resettlement, including: a fact finding mission to Vietnam (March/April 1989); visits to the Orderly Departure Program (ODP), in Bangkok, Thailand; The Philippine Refugee Processing Center in Bataan, The Philippines (PRPC); and local level resettlement communities in the United States. Governmental and non-governmental officials were interviewed as were Amerasians and family members in each context.

Following an Executive Summary the paper is divided into two major sections, Amerasian Processing from Vietnam and the Philippine Refugee Processing Center. Topics covered include: The Amerasian Homecoming Act, the Proposed Amerasian Processing Center in Vietnam, a history and review of the Philippine Refugee Processing Center, Amerasians and Mental Health, and The Role of the Voluntary Agencies in Amerasian resettlement.

The paper concludes that Amerasian departures can not be managed in the time frame set by the Amerasian Homecoming Act, that the living conditions at the PRPC are inadequate and may not be in the Amerasians' best interests, and that serious questions remain about the quality of resettlement being provided in the United States cluster sites. Recommendations include: the normalization of diplomatic relations between the governments of Vietnam and the United States; bilateral efforts to meet the time limitations of the Amerasians Homecoming Act; a non-partisan study regarding the value and expense of the training program at the PRPC; a task force to inquire about the quality of resettlement services in the U.S. cluster sites; and increased involvement of Mutual Assistance Associations in the Amerasian resettlement program.

Williams, L. (1989) "America's Other Children" *Military Lifestyle,* May.

Beginning with a brief juxtapositioning of the French government's response to the Eurasian children born of out its involvement in Vietnam to the United States's response, the author highlights two individual Amerasians under the Amerasian Homecoming Act. Both were teenage boys resettled with United States military families on active duty.

The reports are anecdotal and describe some adjustment difficulties for these new arrivals. Language difficulties and cultural differences were noted. Both foster families sounded upbeat and positive regarding their new sponsorship experience.

The article concludes with a description of volunteer efforts aimed at helping Amerasians in the Norfolk-Virginia Beach, Virginia area. Also included in the article are briefs on "How Can You Help?" to become a foster parent, Big Brother/Big Sister, and "Looking for your child?" for fathers of Amerasians. Contact persons and/or agency addresses are provided.

FILMS

Northshield, R. (1973) *The Sins of the Fathers*, National Broadcasting Corporation Television documentary.

This one hour documentary made in Vietnam in 1973, before the fall of the South Vietnamese government in 1975, focuses on half-Vietnamese, half-American children. In 1973, the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare estimated there were 10-15 thousand Amerasian children in Vietnam. Stating that racism is part of Vietnamese society, the film stresses the negative impact on Afro-Amerasian children. Reference is made to the historical prejudice expressed by Vietnamese towards the Montangards, a dark skinned ethnic minority group composed of 33 aboriginal tribes.

The film estimates there were 700,000 orphans or half-orphans in South Vietnam in 1973 and describes the poor conditions in the country's orphanages. Footage of Go Vap orphanage in Saigon stresses the abandonment of Amerasian children and notes that a disproportionate number of them were half-black. In its summary, the film emphasizes the size and complexity of the problem and the lack of unified effort to address it.

Lewis, M. (1988) *America's Children of War*. The Christian Science Monitor Reports, June 3.

This half-hour documentary is based on interviews with Amerasians in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), at the Philippine Refugee Processing Center in Bataan, and in the United States. After providing a concise historical perspective, including the difficult political history of American/Vietnamese relations, the issue of racial prejudice against Amerasians in Vietnam is highlighted through personal accounts. The particular situation of children of black Americans is emphasized. The film notes that in Vietnam, Amerasians are the "least likely to finish school or get a good job."

A series of personal portraits illustrate key conflicts for Amerasian youth: leaving family members behind, the complexity of searching for American fathers and the problems of adjusting to life in the United States. Interviews with Amerasians already in the United

States yield a portrait of the difficulty, as long-held hopes and expectations encounter the realities of a new life after arrival. An extremely high drop-out rate from school (60 percent) is cited. The film notes Amerasians' almost universal desire to know their fathers but reports that only 15 percent of Amerasians make any contact and only 2 percent have been successfully reunited. The situation of American fathers looking for their Amerasian children is also described and illustrated through a number of individual stories. The film concludes by emphasizing that Amerasian youth and their family members will require substantial support in their efforts to adjust to a new land, new culture and new way of life.

Paxman, J. (1983) *Vietnam: Children of the Dust*, British Broadcasting Corporation.

This half-hour documentary was made soon after the first significant number of Amerasians began to leave Vietnam in 1982. After opening with footage of the fall of Saigon in April, 1975, the film focuses on an individual story of one father's search for, and eventual reunification with, his Amerasian son. In sharp contrast is another individual story of an Amerasian boy and his mother being resettled in the same United States town as his American father who expresses ambivalence regarding contact with his son and overtly rejects any sense of responsibility toward the boy's mother.

The film states that Amerasians are referred to as Bu Doi, "Dust of Life," in Vietnam and portrays them as outcasts. The Vietnamese government's position that Amerasian emigration is a humanitarian effort is questioned and the film suggests the Vietnamese are exporting what they regard as social problem. Brief interviews with officials, including the Pearl S. Buck Foundation and United States resettlement professionals, are included.